

## CHAPTER TWO

### LAND USE

**GOAL:** *Retain a mix of land uses that will meet housing needs, protect the quality of life for residents, and enhance Rockville's tax base based upon Smart Growth principles and regional cooperation.*

### POLICIES

1. New development should positively impact the quality of life for existing residents, and contribute to making Rockville a unique and special place to live and to raise a family.
2. In accordance with Smart Growth principles, new growth in should be concentrated in Town Center to reinforce the need for Town Center to serve as heart of the community.
3. Continue to protect residential areas adjoining growth areas by providing buffer and transition areas.
4. Promote private and public development of the Town Center (part of a separate Town Center Master Plan).
5. Ensure new growth does not occur without adequate public facilities, especially schools.
6. Ensure a mix of housing types and price ranges to meet diverse needs of different sectors of the City's population, with an emphasis on the importance of owner-occupied housing.
7. Foster greater cooperation/coordination between the City and the State, the County Board of Education, and the County's planning and construction efforts.
8. Economic development efforts should focus on attracting and fostering high-tech and related businesses to locate and prosper in Rockville.
9. Citizen involvement and residents' interests should be given priority in the development process.
10. Encourage residential land use within the City so that the "Jobs to Houses" ratio is reduced.

### INTRODUCTION

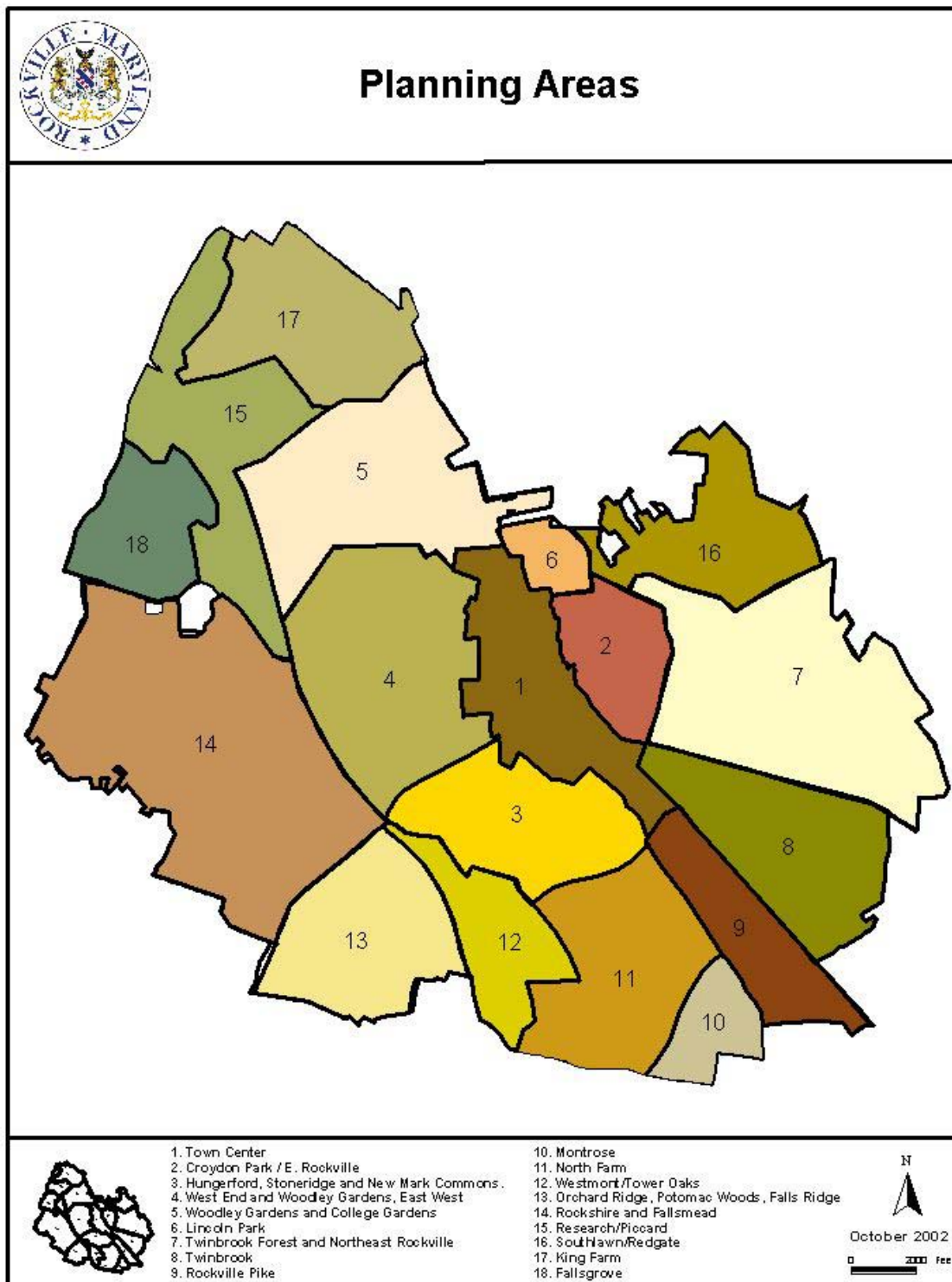
This chapter describes the general land use categories within the boundaries of Rockville and makes recommendations for future use.

Rockville's current total land area is 13 square miles. Of that, approximately 74% is zoned residential and includes almost 950 acres of open space. Rockville's earliest municipal identity was related to its function as the governmental center of Montgomery County, and the County's governmental presence is still very apparent in the Town Center. However, Rockville is also a commercial hub for the metropolitan area, especially along Rockville Pike.

Modern land use patterns within the City were established in the 1960s as Rockville developed as a corridor city as envisioned in the 1964 "...on Wedges and Corridors" Plan for the region. The city's location along major transportation corridors such as Route 355 (Rockville

Pike/Hungerford Drive/Frederick Road), the Metro line, and I-270 contributes to the current land use pattern. Rockville has become a major employment and retail center in the metropolitan area. This has affected traffic patterns, business location decisions, and housing growth.

Of major importance to the City's growth potential is that there is very little vacant land left in Rockville, and there is little vacant land immediately adjacent to the city limits for annexation. The three large pieces of undeveloped land (in terms of buildings) are the golf courses (two private and one public), none of which currently have development plans. Consequently, it is anticipated that future development within the existing corporate limits of Rockville will be of two types: redevelopment of existing sites and infill on the few remaining vacant lots.



**EXISTING ZONING SUMMARY**  
(Excludes Rights of Way)

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Retail</b>			<b>Residential</b>		
C-1	3	0%	R-150	328	5%
C-2	76	1%	R-20	101	1%
C-3	8	0%	R-30	93	1%
			R-40	12	0%
<b>Industrial</b>			R-60	1,479	20%
I-1	251	3%	R-75	180	2%
I-2	68	1%	R-90	1,629	23%
			R-E	721	10%
<b>Office</b>			R-H	12	0%
I-3	490	7%	RPR	21	0%
I-4	31	0%	R-S*	779	11%
O-1	28	0%			
O-2	11	0%			
			<b>SUMMARY</b>		
<b>Mixed Use</b>			<b>Retail</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>1%</b>
O-3	630	9%	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>4%</b>
RPC	197	3%	<b>Office</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>8%</b>
TC0-1	13	0%	<b>Mixed Use</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>13%</b>
TC0-2	22	0%	<b>Residential</b>	<b>5,355</b>	<b>74%</b>
TCM-1	27	0%	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,238</b>	<b>100%</b>
TCM-2	28	0%			

\*Note: 254 acres of R-S zone is mixed use (Falls Grove).

Residential zones constitute 74% of the land area within Rockville although the total amount of residential uses in the City is larger due to residential portions of the mixed use areas. The mixed use category now constitutes 13% of the land area in the City. Depending upon the project, this category can include office, retail, and residential uses. The major mixed use areas in Rockville are the Town Center and the Tower Oaks, King Farm and Falls Grove developments.

The 1970 Master Plan divided the City into 15 planning areas. Typically, these areas contain similar uses; however, the actual zoning requirements may be varied by subdivision in residential areas. These planning areas are:

<b>Planning Area 1:</b>	<b>Town Center (2001)</b>
Planning Area 2:	Croydon Park (1982)
Planning Area 3:	Hungerford, Stoneridge, and New Mark Commons (1985)
Planning Area 4:	West End/Woodley Gardens (1989)
Planning Area 5:	Woodley Gardens and College Gardens
Planning Area 6:	Lincoln Park (1984)
Planning Area 7:	Twinbrook Forest and Northeast Rockville
Planning Area 8:	Twinbrook (1982)

<b>Planning Area 9:</b>	<b>Rockville Pike (1989)</b>
Planning Area 10:	Montrose
Planning Area 11:	North Farm
<b>Planning Area 12:</b>	<b>Westmont/Tower Oaks (1985)</b>
Planning Area 13:	Orchard Ridge, Potomac Woods, Falls Ridge
Planning Area 14:	Rockshire and Fallsmead
<b>Planning Area 15:</b>	<b>Research/Piccard Area</b>
<b>Planning Area 16:</b>	<b>Southlawn/Redgate</b>

The areas in bold type are predominantly non-residential, although Westmont/Tower Oaks is a mixed-use development that includes townhouses, and there are multi-family complexes along with retail and office within the Town Center and along Rockville Pike. Areas that have an individual neighborhood master plan have the year of publication in parenthesis. Not all of the planning areas have individual master plans. The Residential Neighborhood Chapter and the Economic Development -- Non-Residential Neighborhood Chapter will discuss each of the planning areas.

In addition, two new residential planning areas are proposed. These are:

Planning Area 17: King Farm  
Planning Area 18: Fallsgrove

King Farm and Fallsgrove are large areas that have been annexed by Rockville and received approval as mixed-use developments (although the zoning calculations in the above table have been calculated according to the underlying zone and not included in the mixed use category with the exception of the O-3 zone). The office areas of the two neighborhoods are included in Planning Area 15.

Traditionally, land use is associated with zoning. The majority (80%) of land within Rockville is zoned single-family residential, but multi-family residential is also allowed within the city. Lot size and building setback requirements from property lines may vary depending upon the particular residential zone but are consistent within that zone. Some non-residential uses may also be permitted in residential zones after going through a special exception review process. The protection of the integrity of its single-family residential neighborhoods has been a consistent goal of this and previous Master Plans.

A variety of zones also delineate the non-residential uses within the City. Office, commercial, and industrial are the general categories; however, these are further subdivided into particular zones by intensity and type of use. There are also special zones such as the Town Center zones, the Rockville Pike Commercial (RPC) Zone, and the Rockville Pike Residential (RPR) Zone. These are areas that the City wanted to foster particular uses to enhance the character of the zone.

## **SPECIFIC LAND USE PATTERNS**

### **Residential**

As stated before, 74% of the land area within the City is zoned residential. The majority of the land that is zoned residential is either zoned R-60 (6,000 sq. ft. per lot) or R-90 (9,000 sq. ft. per lot). The majority of the land that is zoned R-90 is located west of Route 355. The

majority of the land that is located east of Route 355 and devoted to housing is zoned R-60 as are the West End Park and Hungerford neighborhoods which are located in the center of Rockville.

There is very little housing in the Suburban Residential (R-S) category. The density for this zone is 20,000 sq. ft. per lot (nearly a one-half acre). The majority of the land zoned R-S is actually being used as City-owned parkland (including Redgate Golf Course) or institutional uses (Chestnut Lodge and Montgomery College). The Thomas Farm property (now Falls Grove development) is zoned R-S but is being developed under the Comprehensive Planned Development category.



Virtually no housing has been built in the Residential Estate zone (R-E) which mandates one acre per lot. Only Lakewood Country Club and Woodmont Country Club are zoned R-E with the exception of five lots that were annexed across from Lakewood Country Club and the three lots located within the City on Hectic Hill Lane.

The Rose Hill, King Farm, and Falls Grove developments were developed either as Planned Residential Unit developments (PRUs) or Comprehensive Planned Developments (CPDs). These are considered special development procedures (as are cluster developments and Residential Townhouse (RTH) Developments). Depending upon parcel size and the intent of the master plan, the developments may include mixed uses (different residential types of housing, offices, and/or retail uses) as well as open space. Both Falls Grove and King Farm are being developed under the neotraditional and “New Urbanism” philosophies that entail a variety of dense housing styles located on what is considered to be a traditional grid street network that has sidewalks and street trees and encompasses offices, retail, and public transportation – all within walking distance.

## **Commercial Land Use**

Major commercial and retail uses are primarily located along Rockville Pike and in the Town Center. Additional retail uses are located in smaller centers interspersed in the residential neighborhoods. These uses constitute approximately 4% of the land within the City.

## **Rockville Pike**

Rockville’s most important retail area is the Rockville Pike corridor which extends south along Route 355 from the intersection of Viers Mill Road to the City limits. The City’s boundary lies just south of the intersection of Twinbrook Parkway, but north of Federal Plaza (which is outside of the City limits). Rockville Pike draws consumers from a large portion of Montgomery

County and throughout the metropolitan area. Although there is no regional mall located in the City's portion of the Pike, there are over 1.0 million square feet of space that provides a wide array of retail goods and services.

Rockville Pike retains much of its early character as a suburban commercial strip with convenience stores, restaurants, and personal service establishments in local shopping areas



Ritchie Center, Talbott Center, and centers along Rollins Avenue. The architecture along Rockville Pike is varied and often associated with a store's or restaurant's corporate image. Major shopping centers such as Congressional and Wintergreen Plazas contribute to the retail character of the Rockville Pike corridor and provide shoppers with a selection and range of goods that is equivalent to a large regional mall. However, because of concerns over increased traffic, safety, and aesthetic reasons, the Mayor and Council recently adopted an amendment to limit the size of

individual stores (generally known as "big boxes") to less than 65,000 sq. ft. within the entire City.

In 1989, the majority of Rockville Pike was rezoned under a new zoning classification – Rockville Pike Commercial (RPC)-to promote mixed use development. The RPC zone permits office, retail, and residential uses and promotes high-quality commercial development with the preservation of retail uses under an optional method of development. The optional method of development permits development in excess of the 0.35 Floor Area Ratio (FAR - the lot size times FAR equals amount of development that is permitted) limit if the development conforms to more stringent standards.

Although the majority of uses along Rockville Pike are associated with retail, there are over 400 units of apartments located directly on the Pike. In addition, there are approximately 800 units of housing located on Congressional Lane and Rollins Avenue, which are immediately adjacent to the Pike.

The Pike also emerged as an office market in the mid-1980s, with the construction of four major office buildings. The office building at 1801 Rockville Pike houses three biotech firms which collectively have almost 500 employees.

A balance in the mix of retail, residential and office uses in the Rockville Pike corridor and at the Twinbrook Metro station is the preferred land use pattern. The Rockville Pike Neighborhood Plan should be reviewed and revised, along with the Zoning Ordinance, to ensure that the corridor is transitioning toward this balance and away from the predominance of retail uses.

## Town Center

Retail uses within the Town Center are at a much smaller scale than those located on the Rockville Pike. The retail stores provide service and convenience goods to the adjacent



housing within the Town Center, the West End/Woodley Gardens neighborhoods and to residents of Lincoln Park and Croydon Park. The retail uses also provide support for the government and office functions throughout the area. There are several grocery stores, small specialty stores, service businesses, a movie theater complex, and small restaurants located within walking distance of each other. The zoning in the Town Center encourages support retail uses in several of the zones to complement the office and residential uses.

The Town Center is the subject of a separate master plan to develop a strategic plan to attract more retail and housing to the area as well as to determine how much office use is necessary to support the wanted retail. The current boundary includes North Stonestreet Avenue, although the street is separated from the Town Center by the Metro tracks. Another issue is Hungerford Drive/Frederick Road. Visually, this portion of Route 355 is very similar to Rockville Pike and has the same highway route designation. Because its width is formidable to cross, Route 355 tends to function as the eastern boundary of the Town Center when in fact it is within the Town Center boundaries. The recommendations of the Town Center Master Plan for North Stonestreet Avenue should be further evaluated through updates to the Lincoln Park and Croydon Park Neighborhood Plans.



## Neighborhood Centers

Several neighborhood centers are scattered throughout the residential areas of the City. For the most part, these centers provide convenience goods and services to nearby residents. Anchors for these centers tend to be convenience stores, video rental stores, dry cleaning establishments, and small restaurants. These centers are intended to remain small and oriented to the adjacent neighborhood, in order to help eliminate some of the traffic along Route 355 without adding to the traffic within the neighborhood.

## Industrial Use

There are four industrial zoning designations in the city. These are the I-1, I-2, I-3, and I-4 Zones.

Zones I-1 and I-2 are considered service industrial. Service industrial uses constitute approximately 2% of the city's land base, and there are currently over two million square feet of service industrial space within Rockville. Most of this space is concentrated in low-rise warehouse buildings. In the I-1 Zone, property is utilized primarily by industries such as graphics and printing firms, communications services, sheet metal companies, automotive repair, and electronic, carpentry and plumbing services. Other I-1 uses may include manufacturing, warehousing, and wholesaling facilities. The I-2 Zone is similar to the I-1 zone, but allows a broader range of uses for light manufacturing, warehousing, and wholesaling.



facilities. With the exception of the Pepco site on West Gude Drive and three other parcels along Research Drive, most of the I-1 and I-2 parcels are located east of the Metro Line along East Gude Drive, Loftstrand Lane, Southlawn Lane, North Stonestreet Avenue, and Lewis Avenue. Most of these sites appear to have very little room for expansion.

The service sector is expected to remain strong in the City because the services that are located in this zone provide essential support to the businesses and residents in the City such as printing, graphics, storage, and automobile repair. Consequently, there is a desire to preserve the existing acreage for service and industrial uses because much of the previously industrially zoned land has been rezoned to other uses throughout the County. However, a problem with the I-1 and I-2 Zones is that some of the sites were developed at a time when site development standards did not limit building and pavement coverage, or require parking standards, buffers, or landscaping. Some of the sites do not have adequate off-street parking. This is not as much of a problem for the sites surrounded by similar uses. However, there are residential houses directly across the street from the I-1 Zone that is located on the west side of North Stonestreet Avenue and the west side of Lewis Avenue. If the buildings and/or properties are not maintained, the condition of these industrial sites can adversely affect the adjacent residential neighborhood.

The purpose of the I-3 Zone is to provide an open attractive environment for certain office uses and low intensity industrial activities. Development is limited to those industrial activities which can be operated in a clean and quiet manner and which will be least objectionable to adjoining residential zones. The majority of the I-3 uses are located just off of I-270 along Piccard Drive and Research Boulevard. The sites resemble a low density, landscaped office park; and in fact, most of the buildings house offices.

The purpose of the I-4 Zone is similar to the I-3 Zone with recreational facilities added to the list of permitted uses. The I-4 Zone is rather small and located on Taft Court. The area is developed with mostly four-five story buildings and a few low-rise buildings. Only one lot is vacant.

Portions of the land abutting East Gude Drive are actually located within Montgomery County, and in the past, individual property owners have applied for annexation to the City of Rockville. Because of concerns about the zoning reclassification that generally happened with annexation, the County and the City conducted a joint study of the Gude Drive-Southlawn Lane Industrial area in order to establish an annexation policy. In 1999, the Montgomery County Council adopted a resolution concerning the annexation of land by the City of Rockville in the East Gude Drive area.

Past annexations to Rockville changed the County's I-2 Zone to the City's I-1 Zone. The County's I-2 Zone allows more heavy industrial uses than does the City's I-1 Zone. State law requires County Council concurrence to place a property in a zone different from the County's zone. Since there is a shortage of industrial I-2 within the County, the retention of this type of zoning is considered important for the County. Consequently, it was determined that annexations from the County's I-2 Zone to the City's I-1 Zone for properties located east of Gude Drive not be considered consistent with the County's zoning because the City does not have an industrial zone similar to the County's



industrial zone. However, uses located along the west side of Gude Drive within the County are generally consistent with the City's I-1 Zone. Consequently, annexations to the City of Rockville will be allowed in that area if the application meets the County's overall annexation requirement.



An emerging industry with Montgomery County is the biotechnology (biotech) industry. "Biotechnology is the commercial application of living organisms or their products through deliberate manipulation of their DNA molecules." (p. 11/*Technical Report: Biotechnology Industry in Montgomery County* by M-NCPPC) Experts have predicted that the biotechnology field would be bigger than the electronics industry and "...bigger and more lasting than the impact even of the internet." (p. 16)

Currently, the San Francisco area has the largest number of biotech firms. Montgomery County and the Boston, Massachusetts area are "about tied" for the second largest number of biotech firms. Interestingly, within Montgomery County, the majority of the emerging biotechnology businesses are clustered in Rockville, in the adjacent Shady Grove Life Sciences Center, or in the Twinbrook area. Most of the area biotech firms have formal relationships with the National Institute of Health (NIH), the National Cancer Institute, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Center for Disease Control. In addition, apparently, employees of biotech industries tend to collaborate with other firms as needed for particular projects. Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland are located just outside of the City also help to contribute to the scientific community in the area.

Generally, depending upon the type of research, biotech firms are housed in either office, industrial, or "flex" buildings. If the firm uses computers as their primary research method, office buildings are generally suitable. However, many firms still utilize the traditional "wet" lab where evaluations for activity, toxicity, and absorption can take years." (p. 30) Furthermore, if lab animals are used, additional environmental considerations are necessary within the building. Consequently, warehouse or "flex" buildings are the most useful. These buildings have high ceilings (necessary for duct work), floors that can handle heavy weight, large doors, and loading docks.

Currently, there appears to be a shortage of wet lab space within the county. Since the development of possible new drugs is slow and risky, developers tend not to develop speculative wet lab space which can cost from \$100-150 per square foot. Since most biotech firms like to lease space rather than finance the construction of an individual building, the shortage is understandable. However, if the biotech industry is as high of a growth industry as predicted, it may be worthwhile to pursue options to allow more wet lab space.

Many biotech industries begin in incubator-type spaces. However, as the firms grow, space expansion or relocation space also becomes an issue. This could affect local traffic and the need for additional parking. Within Montgomery County, the M-NCPPC is projecting that the biotech industry will grow from 15,000 jobs in 2000 to at least 100,000 jobs in 2020. Currently, there is transportation capacity to serve new buildings (in approved subdivisions) housing about 139,000 added jobs (of all types) in the County. (p. 24) However, it is not clear whether this county-wide space is zoned for industrial use. Within the city, "research laboratories" are

allowed in all of the industrial zones and in the O-3 Zone. However, the city Zoning Ordinance only defines dental and medical laboratories, not research laboratory. It is recommended that the Zoning Ordinance be updated to confirm that research laboratories associated with the biotech industry are allowed in the industrial and O-3 Zones.

## Office Land Use

Office space is located throughout the city. The greatest building height allowable for office buildings is in the TCM-2 (Town Center Mixed Use) Zone. This is to encourage mixed-use developments containing office, commercial and multifamily residential uses in an area adjacent to the Metro line. Located between North Washington Street and Hungerford Drive, the TCM-1 Zone allows building height to be within 75' and 100' (depending upon the application meeting certain requirements). This is another area where in the past the city has encouraged mixed use development but at a slightly less intensive rate due to the location of the residential neighborhoods to the west. Traditionally, Montgomery County has occupied many of the office buildings within the Town Center as well as associated court buildings. Legal offices have also occupied the office space, some of which are in converted historic residential buildings located adjacent to the Town Center.



Office use is also encouraged along the Rockville Pike although the allowable building height is less than the TCM-2 Zone. The other major areas for office use are in the well landscaped office parks that are located near I-270. The areas are primarily located between Shady Grove Road and West Gude Drive along Research Boulevard and Piccard Drive. As mentioned before, these office parks also allow low intensity industrial uses. The standards and restrictions of the I-3 Zone are designed to provide a green landscape compatible with surrounding or abutting residential zones. Development is limited to a low concentration of buildings and uses are restricted to those activities that can be operated in a clean and quiet manner.

There has been a trend toward redevelopment of some of the office park parcels that were developed well below the current maximum allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the zone (0.5 FAR).<sup>\*</sup> The I-3 Zone contains an optional method of development which allows a greater mix of uses and increased density in proximity to planned or programmed transit stations in order to encourage use of those facilities. Approval of the optional method should be considered only after careful consideration in view of the principles of this Plan and analysis of the impacts on surrounding developments. As these areas are in the I-270 development corridor, a critical issue will be to maintain as much green area as possible while accommodating growth in areas that can be served by the existing highway system as well as to encourage multi-modal means of transportation. The large setbacks required in the I-3 Zone make transit service difficult. This plan recommends consideration of a text amendment to reduce setbacks in the I-3 Zone.

[<sup>\*</sup> FAR is the ratio of the gross floor area of all buildings on a lot to the net lot area. For an example, at a FAR of 1.0, a one-story building would cover the entire site; a two-story building would cover half the site, and a four-story building would cover one-quarter of the site. Of course, required parking would also have to be included on the site.]

## Comprehensive Planned Developments

Modern zoning regulations tended to isolate different areas from each other according to use. For instance, residential areas traditionally are separated from commercial areas. However, a recent trend is to allow and encourage large areas to be developed as Comprehensive Planned Developments (CPD). This is an attempt to integrate a variety of low intensity industrial, commercial, and/or residential uses within a large parcel in an integrated and planned fashion. The standards, restrictions, and special development procedures are designed to:

1. Create extensive open spaces and protect surrounding or abutting residential zones;
2. Permit flexibility in building siting and design; to implement development of comprehensive planned developments where recommended by the Master Plan or where Master Planned for restricted industrial development.
3. Permit staging of comprehensive planned developments consistent with adequacy of public facilities; and
4. Take advantage of the unique opportunities afforded for large tracts of land under single control;

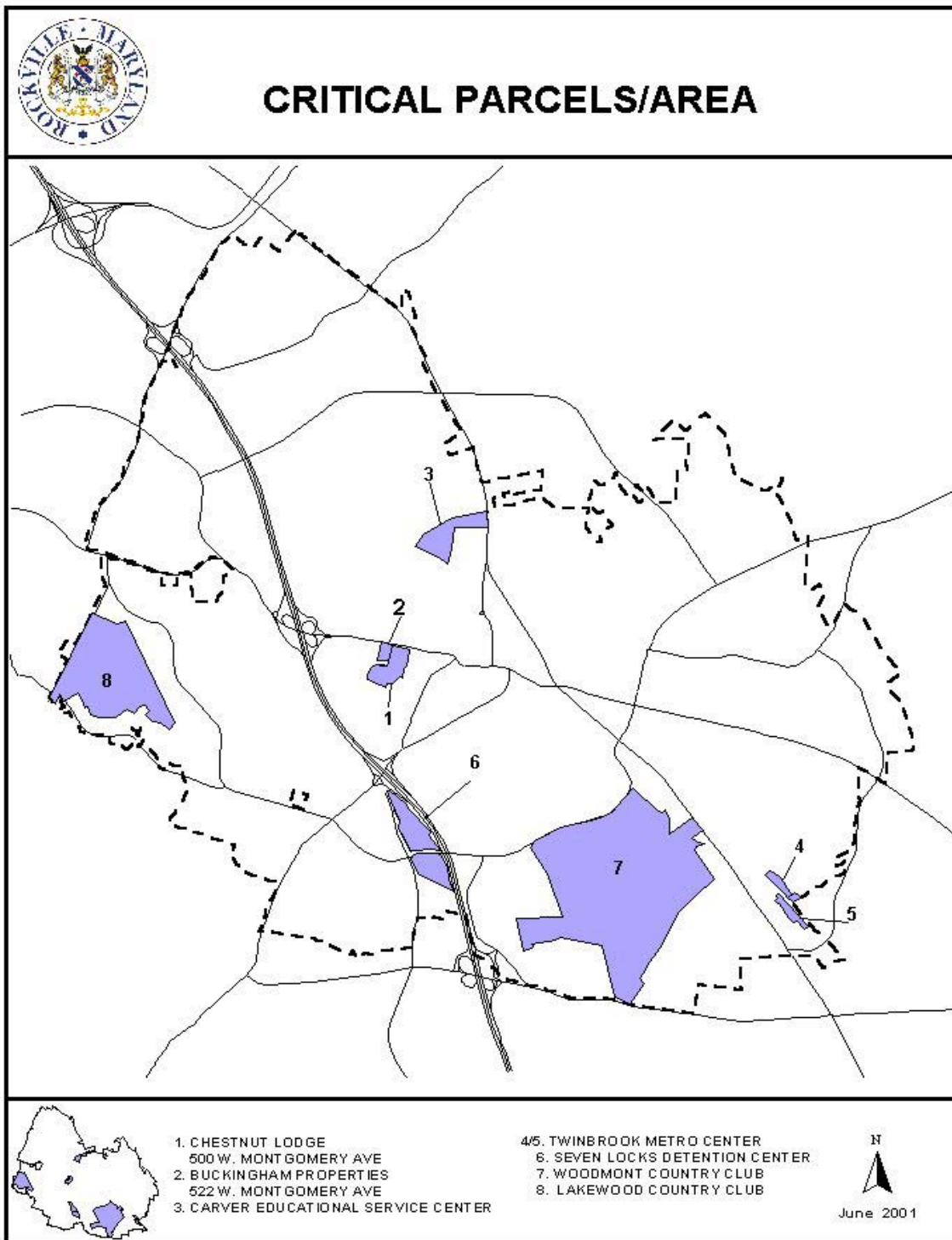
A Comprehensive Planned Development is only allowed in an O-3 Zone or where recommended by the Master Plan, and the site has to be a minimum of 40 acres unless the use of the comprehensive planned development is recommended for the property in the Master Plan. Tower Oaks was the first Comprehensive Planned Development within the city and has areas set aside for multi-family, office buildings, and a restaurant. The 1993 Master Plan recommended that the Thomas Farm (Falls Grove), Irvington Farm (King Farm), and Fortune Parc (which is located in Montgomery County and has not been annexed to the city) be required to be developed as comprehensive planned developments. In fact, Thomas Farm (Falls Grove) and King Farm were designed and received Concept Plan approvals as Comprehensive Planned Developments.

## CRITICAL ISSUES

### Jobs to Houses Ratio

The jobs to houses ratio (J/H) is the description of how many jobs are available to those who live in a specific area. It is desirable to have a balance between the two. However, it would be very difficult for the City to have a one to one balance between jobs and houses. Having a number of businesses within a municipality helps to divide the tax burden between the residential taxpayer and the business community. If ample local jobs are available, more people have the opportunity to work within the community, thereby shortening their commuting time. This would not only help to alleviate traffic congestion but would increase the amount of leisure time for the worker. Obviously, affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, and pleasant surroundings are also necessary to make a community a desirable place to live.

Currently, with Rockville city limits, the jobs to housing ratio is 3.3 to 1. This suggests that there may be a need for more housing in the City particularly in the Town Center close to many jobs. While 80% of the city's land is zoned residential, much of the housing is already built with King Farm and Falls Grove being the major exceptions. Currently, just over 50% of Rockville's General Fund revenue comes from property taxes. Of that, residential property tax





## Infill

Development can occur in a variety of ways. Because there are so few large properties that are undeveloped within the City, most development will be either redevelopment of an existing site, expansion of existing buildings to accommodate increased use, or development of vacant properties that are within either existing commercial, industrial, or residential subdivisions. It is generally desirable that the quality of the infill development be compatible in use, architecture, and scale to the surrounding structures. This is especially true in residential neighborhoods.

## Critical Parcel/Area Analysis

The land use and zoning pattern in Rockville is well established and is generally appropriate for the future. This section addresses only sites where an alternate land use or zoning category would provide greater compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood or where there are other land use or zoning alternatives to achieve either smart growth initiatives or environmental protection. To that end, some properties are recommended for development as either Comprehensive Planned Development (CPD) or as a Planned Residential Unit (PRU). As previously noted, CPDs allow large areas to be developed as a single development containing a mix of uses and housing types and open space. PRUs allow for a mix of residential unit types and common open space areas, while providing for flexibility in site design through a waiver of normal zoning development standards.

In general, only sites above five acres are included in this analysis. If sites with development potential are not mentioned, the zoning and land use recommendations on those sites are not recommended for change with the exception of a few small sites that are discussed separately under potential zoning changes or text amendments.

The following Town Center sites are included in the Town Center Master Plan: the Rockville Metro Station site, North Stonestreet Avenue, and the Board of Education properties along North Stonestreet Avenue. The Critical Parcel/Areas Map shows the sites discussed in this chapter. Although not discussed in each individual critical parcel description, it should be understood that each development will follow the *Environmental Guidelines*, stormwater management requirements, *Street Tree Master Plan* recommendations, and Historic District regulations as applicable. It should also be noted that the City strongly encourages community input in the development process.

### Critical Parcel/Area #1

#### **Chestnut Lodge, 500 West Montgomery Avenue**

Chestnut Lodge has a long history as a private psychiatric hospital. The main building was constructed in 1889 as the Woodlawn Hotel. In 1906, Ernest Bullard purchased the property, changed its name to Chestnut Lodge, and operated the facility as a private sanitarium, which became a nationally known psychiatric hospital. More recently, Community Psychiatric Clinic, Inc. (CPC) operated the facility until bankruptcy.

Two southern portions of the property were sold and subdivided for single family housing for the Rose Hill and Rose Hill Falls subdivisions. However, the historically significant



Woodlawn Hotel/Chestnut Lodge and numerous other buildings remain on the 20.4-acre site. There is also a significant stand of mature trees and a small wetland on the site. Along West Montgomery Avenue, the first 200 feet of the property is within the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District. The site is zoned RS (20,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size). The preservation of the historic buildings and the site's mature trees and limiting traffic impacts are key concerns.



There are a variety of development options for the property, including utilizing the current buildings in an institutional use, a hotel or spa use, an adult living facility, single family housing under the provisions of the R-S Zone, development under a Special Development Procedure such as variable lot size development, cluster development, or Planned Residential Unit (PRU) or Comprehensive Planned Development (CPD) with restrictions.

### **Recommendation**

This plan recommends that the site be maintained in an institutional use and retain its R-S Zone in order to offer as much protection as possible for the site's historic buildings and mature trees. A residential use on the property may be acceptable if the historic buildings and trees are protected. Development under a Special Development Procedure, such as a variable lot size development, cluster development or Planned Residential Unit (PRU), is recommended if the historic and tree preservation goals are achieved. Development under the Planned Residential Unit development procedure is preferred for its flexibility in site design. However, the number of new residential dwellings on the property should be limited to the base level of development afforded by the R-S Zone, and by the goal of this plan to retain the setting of the historic structures and treed area along West Montgomery Avenue with as little disturbance as possible. The governing minimum lot size, maximum lot coverage and minimum setback requirements that apply to the property shall be those of the R-90 Zone in order that the new development be compatible with existing surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, landscaped buffer areas must be provided on the eastern, southern and western property boundaries, adjacent to existing residential dwellings. Given the property's relationship to the historic character of the West Montgomery Avenue streetscape, it is appropriate for an expanded portion of the property to be located within the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District, and for additional design review of new structures on the remainder of the site by the HDC to ensure their compatibility. This plan recommends against allowing C-1 uses that are normally permitted in a planned residential unit development. Finally, a hotel/spa use in the Main Lodge Building may be an acceptable use as long as it is limited primarily to the existing buildings, without major additions, and is buffered from the adjacent neighborhoods, and protects the site's historic buildings and trees. This would require either a text amendment or the creation of a new zone to provide for this option.

### **Critical Site #2**

#### **Buckingham Property, 522 West Montgomery Avenue**

This is a four-acre site located immediately to the west of the Chestnut Lodge property. Until his death, Dr. Buckingham lived on the property and operated a veterinarian practice there.

Access to the site is off of West Montgomery Avenue although a portion of the site abuts Brent Road. Two residential properties located south of the property have access easements across the property. The site has a large stand of mature trees and a small buffer to a wetland. The property is zoned R-S. The 1989 West End Neighborhood Plan recommended that the site be “zoned in a density compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and that the wooded character of the site be preserved through careful site planning.” If the site is developed as a conventional subdivision according to either an R-60 or R-90 Zone, saving the trees would be very difficult. The parcel is under the five-acre minimum site requirement in the Zoning Ordinance for a special development procedure, but could meet the requirement if combined with the two residential properties that have access through the Buckingham property.

### **Recommendation**

This Plan recommends maintaining the R-S Zone for the property, and supports the development of the property at the base density afforded by the R-S Zone. However, given that the preservation of the trees is an important objective for the site, a Planned Residential Unit Development, with single family detached housing only and without allowing C-1 uses, could be considered in order to maximize the preservation of the trees. However, the number of new residential dwellings on the Buckingham property itself will be limited to 10 (ten) units, with an additional 3 (three) units possible to be located on the Baker and Yates properties if they are included as part of a PRU. In conjunction with the protection of as many trees as possible within common or public open space areas, an increase in density above the R-S zone may be possible on the site if all of the objectives in this Plan are achieved. The governing minimum lot size and maximum lot coverage that apply to the property shall generally be those of the R-90 Zone in order that the new development be compatible with existing surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, landscaped buffer areas must be provided on the eastern, southern and western property boundaries, adjacent to existing residential dwellings. Given the property’s relationship to the historically significant Chestnut Lodge and the historic character of the West Montgomery Avenue streetscape, it is appropriate for a portion of the property to be located within the Historic District, and for additional design review of new structures by the HDC on the site to ensure their compatibility. It is also recommended that there be no street connection to Brent Road.

### **Critical Area #3**

**Carver Educational Service Center, corner Mannakee Street and Hungerford Drive**

The Montgomery County Public Schools’ administrative offices are located on this 30-acre site across from Montgomery College, as is the Rock Terrace School. Access to the administrative office is on Mannakee Street, and access to Rock Terrace is on Martins Lane. The site is zoned R-S as is the Montgomery College property. However, nearby properties along Hungerford Drive are zoned C-2 and adjacent residential uses are zoned R-30, R-60 and R-90. There are retail uses located adjacent to the property to the south and directly across Route 355. Office uses are



located north of the site as is Montgomery College.

Although the building has had multiple additions since it was built in 1951 as the George Washington Carver High School and Junior College, a portion of the east façade is original. The building has cultural significance as the first (and only) institution built for African-American secondary and post-secondary students in Montgomery County and was also the first public school in the County to be named for an African-American individual, the eminent educator and scientist George Washington Carver.

The following are development options for the property under the current zone:

- Development of single-family lots at a minimum of 20,000 square feet.
- Development of residential uses under special development procedures (Planned Residential Unit, variable lot size, cluster development).
- Development of the property under the Comprehensive Planned Development procedure (based upon a recommendation for that development procedure in the Master Plan).
- Continued use of the property as an educational facility.
- Increasing the educational use of the facility with a Special Exception.
- Other institutional uses as defined by the Zoning Ordinance (church, nursing home, hospital, private club etc.) either permitted or with a Special Exception.
- Publicly owned or operated buildings and uses, excluding sanitary landfills and incinerators.
- Rezone either a portion of the property or the entire property to a different residential zone or to a commercial or office zone.

## **Recommendation**

An educational facility, which may include the Montgomery County Board of Education administrative offices, or facilities serving Montgomery College or other education-related or public safety purposes, is the preferred use for the site. Retaining the original portion of the Carver school and commemorating the cultural significance of the George Washington Carver High School and Junior College is also recommended for the site. Development of the site should not exceed an FAR of 0.4 for the entire property, and development of private offices and commercial uses is prohibited. A suitable location for a new administration building or other new construction should respect significant views of the original Carver structure. The property is situated in close proximity to two of the City's residential planning areas, West End and Woodley Gardens East-West, and Woodley Gardens-College Gardens. In order to minimize any adverse effect of the scale and massing of a new structure or structures adjacent to residential neighborhoods, building setback restrictions should also be implemented to allow for buffers from the residential development adjacent to and located across the street from the site. For instance, a setback of twice the proposed building height would be required adjacent to a residential property line. In addition, a minimum of one-half of setback areas should be comprised of

a landscaped buffer area to screen new construction from existing neighborhoods. In no case could the building height exceed the maximum height limit in the R-S Zone.

#### **Critical Site #4 Twinbrook Metro Station**

The Twinbrook Metro is comprised of a number of parcels. An 8.3 acre site is located within the City on the west side of the tracks. The parcel is zoned RPC. On the west side of the tracks, there are 17.87 acres, of which 1.7 acres (the former Suburban Propane property) are located within the City and zoned I-2. The WMATA property was identified in the 1993 Plan as a possible annexation site but not discussed as a Critical Parcel. The 1993 Master Plan recommended a multi-family residential use for the area closest to the Twinbrook neighborhood with “significant buffering and setbacks.” Currently, WMATA is exploring ways to develop all of their parcels at the Twinbrook Metro site. A Montgomery County sponsored Twinbrook Metro Station Area Design Charrette recommended that the area be designed as a mixed use, transit, services and village center possibly under the County’s Transit Station Mixed Use (TSM) zone.



#### **Recommendation**

This Plan recommends that the property on the west side of the tracks should retain its RPC/Metro Performance District designation. The property on the east side should be annexed, and it is preferred that the site be placed in the Metro Performance District and zoned RPC and RPR zones to be developed under the Optional Method of Development. The RPC Zone should be located closest to the tracks. However, since the County’s TSM zone allows some design elements (such as height) to be determined as part of the site plan approval process, some modifications to the City’s zones may be warranted depending on the site plan.

The 1993 Master Plan recommended that the 1.7 acre Suburban Propane site be changed from I-2 zone to the R-60 zone, but the zoning was not changed. It is now recommended that if the site is developed independently of the other WMATA parcels, the parcel should be rezoned to O-2. However, if the property is developed in conjunction with the other parcels owned by WMATA as part of a comprehensive plan, it should be zoned under the RPC/Twinbrook Metro Performance District designation. The O-2 zone would allow the site to be developed for offices (with or without daycare), detached one-family dwellings, semi-detached one-family dwellings, or townhouses which would be in keeping with the adjacent townhouses on Halpine Road. An office building close to the tracks would help to buffer the noise from the tracks and could also provide a transition between the industrial uses on Lewis Avenue and the nearby residential uses. However, to avoid a traffic impact from an office use, access to the site should be off Fishers Lane rather than Halpine Road. A park was also described as a suitable use for the property in 1993 and any development of the site should

provide a wide green space and path connecting Lewis Avenue and Halpine Road to the WMATA/Metro facility.

#### **Critical Site #5**

##### **Lewis Avenue/Halpine Road**

The Twinbrook Planning Area includes a 4.8 acre area along the west side of Lewis Road that is zoned I-2 (Light Industrial). Most of this area is developed with the exception of the Suburban Propane site which is currently owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA/Metro). The buildings provide a buffer between the railroad tracks and the residences along Lewis Road. The 1993 Master Plan recommended that this area remain in the I-2 Zone. However, it was also recommended that there be no expansion of the industrial area and that the zoning regulations should not be amended to allow for an intensification of the industrial use. Another recommendation was that the appearance of the area be improved.

#### **Recommendation**

This plan also recommends retention of the I-2 Zone because 1) there tends to be less daily traffic associated with I-2 uses than office or retail, and 2) the expansion of new residential along the tracks does not seem realistic due to the shallow depth of the properties. However, this plan strongly urges that improvements be made to the streetscape such as widening the sidewalk(s), planting of street trees, and installation of parking lot and/or building screening. This would help to mitigate any adverse effects from the uses on the neighborhood.

#### **Critical Area #6**

##### **Seven Locks Detention Center/Montgomery County Facilities**

The Detention Center was built in 1960 and is located in the center of the 25.8 acre site that is zoned R-S (Suburban Residential). The triangular parcel is bordered by Wootton Parkway on the south, Seven Locks Road on the west, and I-270 on the east. Entrances to the Detention Center are off Seven Locks Road. A police substation is located on the site just north of the Detention Center. The site is used as the County's Central Processing Unit (CPU) to process and hold prisoners. The majority of the Seven Locks prison population will be housed in the Seneca Corrections Facility in Clarksburg when it is completed. However, it is expected that the site will continue to be used as a processing facility for persons arrested in Montgomery County. Within the City, there are few alternative sites to relocate the facility. Vacant industrial land within the City is limited.

#### **Recommendation**

The Plan recommends that criminal justice uses be removed from the site as soon as possible. When the Seven Locks Detention Center is closed, it is recommended that the property be developed as a Comprehensive Planned Development (CPD) with a mixed office and residential use. Preferably, the Detention Center and Technical Center properties would be redeveloped as a CPD concurrently. The use of offices is suggested for portions of the property adjacent to I-270 or Wootton Parkway to help mitigate noise from the highway. Residential use is appropriate adjacent to the current area that is zoned R-90. Appropriate transitions and/or

buffers between planned or existing residential uses and planned office uses should be provided.

The Seven Locks Technical Center is located south of Wootton Parkway on a 18.86 acre site that is zoned I-3 (Industrial Park), as are two adjoining, developed properties to the south. The purpose of the zone is to provide an open, attractive environment for certain office uses and low intensity industrial activities. Given the adjacent office uses, a zone change for this site is not recommended.

### **Critical Area #7 Woodmont Country Club**

The Woodmont Country Club is located on a 459-acre site with an entrance on Rockville Pike although the property also borders Wootton Parkway to the north and a narrow portion of the property touches Montrose Road on the south. The western boundary borders the Tower Oaks development and the North Farm subdivision. It is currently zoned R-E (Residential Estate-40,000 sq. ft. lots).

It is not anticipated that the Country Club will be redeveloped for other uses within the next decade. However, there are general issues that will need to be addressed before any development occurs.

### **Recommendation**

The City does not anticipate or desire development of the Country Club property within the planning horizon of this Plan. However, if no longer used as a country club, it is recommended that the site be developed as a Comprehensive Planned Development. The property is envisioned to be developed in its entirety as a mixed-use community, with development densities not to exceed a maximum of .5 FAR for buildable land in nonresidential areas and 6.5 dwelling units per buildable acre. A neighborhood retail center may also be appropriate. A minimum of 35% open space is recommended for both passive and active recreation use on the property, including any wetland, stream buffer, and/or floodplains that are on the site. The Lyddane-Bradley House, built in 1858, also should be preserved because it is architecturally and historically significant to the City of Rockville. Development options that preserve trees and historic structures are preferred. Another important development parameter is the provision of adequate buffers from adjacent residential communities. At a minimum, the buffers should follow the required setbacks for CPDs found in the Zoning Ordinance, and may exceed those requirements based on site conditions and environmental features. These buffers should include existing tree stands and forested areas. The CPD should address the provision of a street plan that provides for adequate dispersal of site-generated traffic. The CPD, or any proposed development in the R-S Zone of some or all of the site, should also address the feasibility of providing a pedestrian and bikeway connection to the Millennium Trail along Wootton Parkway, and to other bikeways designated in the City's Bikeway Master Plan. Within the Comprehensive Planned Development, commercial uses should be located away from existing residential neighborhoods outside the CPD. However, a well-designed mix of uses within the CPD is encouraged.



## **Critical Area #8 Lakewood Country Club**

The Lakewood Country Club is located on 213 acres to the east of Glen Mill Road. The site is surrounded by mostly single-family homes. The exceptions are adjoining school properties and the National Lutheran Home which provides a variety of housing options for the elderly. The site is zoned R-E (Residential Estate-40,000 sq. ft. lots).

### **Recommendation**

The City does not anticipate or desire development of the Country Club property within the planning horizon of this Plan. However, should the property no longer be used as a country club, this Plan recommends that it be developed under the Planned Residential Unit (PRU) zoning regulations, without allowing C-1 uses on the property. Due to the environmental features on the site, careful site planning that preserves these features will be critical. A minimum of 35% open space is recommended for both active and passive recreation, including preserving the streams, wetlands, and floodplains on the site. Generous landscaped buffers, of a minimum width of 50 feet, adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods is also a critical element of a development plan for the property. The landscaped buffer shall not be provided within private lots. The use of private streets within the PRU shall be minimized. It is recommended that the site retain its R-E designation because of environmental restrictions on the site.

## **POTENTIAL CHANGES TO ZONING ORDINANCE**

The Zoning Ordinance contains many of the regulations that control how properties will develop and the uses that may be allowed. Although the Zoning Ordinance has been modified in relation to specific zoning issues through text amendments, a comprehensive review is underway. This review is recommended to:

1. Improve the usability of the Ordinance through conversion to a Visually Interactive Code that includes illustrations, links to definitions, and clear text.
2. Add or modify definitions and appropriate standards for new uses especially those that reflect modern technological changes.
3. Clarify existing ambiguous or conflicting provisions.
4. Examine increased flexibility into the development process to allow such mechanisms as floating zones and administrative adjustments as permitted in the State enabling legislation (Article 66B).
5. Explore modifying the Special Exception process to provide for a streamlined amendment process.
6. Explore the need to create new zones to accommodate new patterns of growth, development, and infill.
7. Modify certain design standards (such as building setbacks, parking standards, and landscaping requirements) to reflect current trends and desired outcomes.

The following outlines some of the possible text or map amendments in a general manner. Specific text must be more detailed and involves more intensive discussion than is possible in a

master plan. However, specific topics are identified to provide direction for future review of the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Industrial Park (I-3) Zone**

The purpose of the I-3 Zone is to “provide an open, attractive environment for certain office uses and low intensity industrial activities. ...and uses are restricted to those industrial activities which can be operated in a clean and quiet manner and which will be least objectionable to adjoining residential uses.” The majority of the land that is zoned I-3 is located along the I-270 corridor (including Research Boulevard and Piccard Drive), Shady Grove Road, or West Gude Drive. Very little property that is zoned I-3 directly abuts residential land. Many of the I-3 properties have been developed but may have some expansion or redevelopment potential. A review of the development standards is recommended to encourage transit serviceability and other worthy environmental or economic objectives. For instance, modifications could be made to the building setback and height requirements.

### **Rockville Pike Zones**

The Rockville Pike Commercial (RPC) and Rockville Pike Residential (RPR) Zones were established to provide a wide range of retail, commercial, and residential uses along the Rockville Pike Corridor. The following areas need to be evaluated in order to determine if any adjustments to the regulations are needed.

The current northern boundary for the RPC Zone ends just south of the Town Center. It has been suggested that certain elements of the zone requirements be continued north along Route 355 to the border of Gaithersburg. The portion of Hungerford Drives that lies within the Town Center would need to conform to the recommendations in the Town Center Master Plan, but a more uniform streetscape along Route 355 would provide a distinct identity for the area.

The design guidelines outlined in the Rockville Pike Corridor Plan should be reviewed to determine if buildings and sites that were constructed according to the guidelines have met expectations. Building setbacks, height requirements, buffer lanes, Metro Performance District boundaries, and the requirements for the Optional Method of Development should be examined for current applicability. It is anticipated that many of the requirements will not change, but some adjustments may be necessary to encourage both the desired type and appearance of redevelopment.

### **Resubdivision of Existing Lots and Pipe Stem Lots (Sec. 25-749)**

In order to maintain an order and uniformity in neighborhoods, a provision was added to the subdivision process to ensure that infill lot subdivisions are in keeping with the character of existing neighborhoods. The intent of the regulation was to impose stricter requirements on lots that were in areas where the average house lot was larger than what the underlying zone required. Most often, these lots are in older neighborhoods but not necessarily within an historic district. The current regulations need to be discussed and possibly adjusted to ensure that the Planning Commission has enough discretion and guidance in the Ordinance to accomplish the intent of the regulation.

## **New Zones**

If land is to be annexed northeast of Gude Drive, the City would have to create another zone that is similar to the County's Heavy Industrial (I-2) zone (for a detailed discussion, see the Urban Growth Areas Chapter). Because of the lack of areas within Montgomery County where heavy industrial activities can be located, the County is reluctant to allow any rezoning of I-2 property within the County to a less intensive industrial use. Creating a heavy industrial zone to be applied only in annexations northeast of Gude Drive may provide a way to also apply regulations to reduce some of the adverse effects from a heavy industrial area.

## **Floating Zones**

State law permits the City to develop and use floating zones. A floating zone typically requires the property owner to apply for the change in zoning based on a specific development plan that can be evaluated to ensure that it is consistent with the intent of the requested zone. This allows the zoning to be applied to a property without having to meet the standard requirement to prove that there was a change in the character of the neighborhood or that there was a mistake in the application of the existing zone. This Plan recommends that floating zones be evaluated and implemented if appropriate to provide flexibility, where desired, that is beneficial to achieving the goals of the Plan. An example of where this may be appropriate is the Coordinated Planning Area between the West End and Town Center Planning Areas, with the potential for the O-2 (Transitional Office) Zone to function as a floating zone. Implementation of a floating zone on North Stonestreet Avenue north of the Rockville Metro station may also be appropriate.

## **General Definitions and Standards for New Uses**

Some of the following uses need to be added either to the definition section, to the use charts, or to the development standards.

Research laboratories: In the Zoning Ordinance's Use Chart, research laboratories are permitted in the I-3 and O-3 zones. However, the only definitions for laboratory in the Ordinance are "laboratory, dental" and "medical." These definitions do not explicitly include the research laboratories typically used in the biotech industry. A definition similar to that used in the Falls Grove approval could be adapted for the Zoning Ordinance. Different types of laboratories may also need to be described and evaluated for appropriate zone location. Commonly used terms, such as "wet" labs may not have technical relevance.

Housing for the elderly and/or physically or mentally handicapped: Since the population is aging and modern philosophy favors de-institutionalizing the handicapped, the issue needs to be discussed and defined. Appropriate zones and different types of housing options should be addressed. For instance, nursing homes and adult day care facilities are not allowed in some commercial zones such as the Town Center zones where different transportation options are available. In addition, the only current definition of elderly housing in the Ordinance is for independent living. No provisions for life care or assisted living types of facilities are in the Ordinance.

**Uses:** There are a variety of modern use categories that need to be added to the Zoning Ordinance. If a use or industry is not expressly allowed in the City's Zoning Ordinance, it is prohibited. In some cases, the use may remain prohibited, but the City's intent will be clear. In addition, other definitions have been identified as needing either a new, adjusted, or expanded definitions. These include but are not limited to:

- Bed and Breakfast Establishments/Small Hotels
- Check Cashing Establishments
- Copying Service Establishments
- Data Warehouses
- Eleemosynary or Philanthropic Institutions
- Home Occupations
- Indoor Automobile Sales Establishments
- Private Educational Categories (the job training designation especially needs clarification and modernization)
- Research Laboratories
- Self Storage Facilities
- Service Industrial Uses
- Utility Buildings (different classes)

### **Text Amendments**

One recommended potential text amendment would be to evaluate the permitted and special exception uses in the C-1 (Local Commercial) zone. It is likely that any additional uses permitted in the C-1 Zone would have size and location restrictions associated with them.

### **Special Exception Amendments**

Currently, there is no modification process to an approved Special Exception. Some minor modifications to an approved Special Exception could be approved through a streamlined process.

### **Administrative Adjustments**

Administrative adjustments could be used to address minor encroachments into the yard setbacks of residential structures (such as decks) that could be approved by staff if clear guidelines were established. This would simplify and streamline the review process and is now permitted under State law.

### **Potential Zone Changes**

There a number of properties that should be considered for zone changes. These are listed below. The reasons for changes or maintaining existing zoning are discussed in either the Critical Areas section or the individual planning areas which are given in parenthesis.

1. **100 South Adams Street:** Change the R-90 zone to the O-2 zone with conditions (Planning Area 4).
2. **17-21 Wood Lane (Jerusalem/Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church property):** Change the R-60, O-2 and TCO-1 zone designations to the O-2 zone (Planning Area 4).
3. **Corner of Lewis Avenue and Halpine Road (Suburban Propane property):** Change the I-2 zone to the O-2 zone or the RPC zone if the property is combined with other WMATA properties and annexed into the City (Land Use: Critical Areas).
4. **Parcel 870, located between West Montgomery Avenue and I-270 just south of the Best Western Hotel property:** Change the R-S zone to the I-3 zone under certain conditions (Planning Area 15).
5. **Parcel P 44 located at the intersection of Piccard/Redland/I-270 (Malasky property):** Change the C-2 zone to the I-3 zone under certain conditions (Planning Area 15).
6. **Hectic Hill properties:** Rezone to the R-150 zone.